Preparing for COIN in Afghanistan

COIN in Afghanistan

- **Population Centric vice Enemy Centric.**
  We must do both simultaneously by repositioning a significant portion of our forces in order to understand the people and secure them where they work and sleep.

- **The Enemy** will come to us if we secure the population.

Why COIN is Population-Centric

- Population-centric COIN is about separating, protecting, influencing and controlling the population.
- The enemy is fluid; the population is fixed -- the enemy may not be identifiable; the local population is.
- *Hearts or Trust*: the population must believe that our success is in their **long-term interests**.
- *Minds or Confidence*: the population must be convinced that we (GIRoA and ISAF) actually are going to **win**, and we (ANSF and ISAF) will provide permanent physical protection.

Understanding the Afghan People

The Afghan People

- They have learned to survive 30 years of war by hedging their bets - that’s why they play both sides.

- The 12 or 16 years you spent in school learning how to read and write, they spent learning how to read people. Understand that they will quickly read you from cover to cover - that’s why your commitment and genuine concern is so important.

- Corruption is a cancer and it is the number one complaint among Afghans, followed by physical security and food security.

The Afghan People

- Afghans base all thoughts and decisions on history.
- Afghans live in an agriculture-based society.
  The Key!
- The difference between the cities and rural tribal areas is about 100 years.
- This is all about the Afghans…Afghans must solve Afghan issues. Everything we do must be focused towards getting the Afghans to pick our side!

The Afghan Culture

- Afghan culture is communal based.
  Jirga's and Shura's!

- Many of the Afghan Tribes are fractured and not operating in historical context.

- Afghan culture is Iraqi culture on steroids! Pashtunwali mixed with Islam.

- Afghans value their culture because they have had nothing else for so long. They will kill, fight, and die for honor, family, and religion.

The Afghan Culture

- The fundamental tenet of **Pashtunwali** is an honor code that amounts to an un-written law of the people that guides individual and collective community behavior. Pashtunwali represents a set of moral codes and rules of conduct that impact the daily lives of many Afghans to a greater degree than the tenants of Islam. Pashtunwali promotes honor, self-respect, independence, justice, hospitality, revenge, and tolerance. The use of violence to defend one's honor and the honor of the family or tribe, to the death if necessary, is the most significant aspect of Pashtunwali.

The Afghan Culture

- Breaching an Afghan's home and offending his honor requires revenge.

- *Example:* You do not do uninvited house searches, except in extreme circumstances. You cordon a village and ask the tribal or village elder to produce the suspect or to allow the ANSF to conduct the search. You search only if given the permission and as a last resort.

The Afghan Culture

- Note: Disregard the past advice at your own peril. You “can” search the house or village but one or more of your soldiers/Marines will pay for that search with his life. Honor is all the tribal or village elder has and you just took it from him. You didn’t show him proper respect in his world. How many of the tribe’s sons is he willing to sacrifice to reclaim his honor? The answer is “all of them” because he is powerless without his honor.

Focus on the ANSF

The ANA/ANP/ABP

- Focus on the Indigenous Security Forces.

  We must make the ANSF the main effort in order to succeed. We are still failing to truly partner with them. We must do more than operate with the ANSF, we must LIVE with the ANSF.

- Listen to the Afghans – they know more about their country/situation than you do.

- Leverage Afghan culture. Don't change how they fight – make their way of fighting better/more effective. Don't try to make them a western army.

The ANA/ANP/ABP

- Focus on ANSF leadership and logistics. Don’t solve their problems for them – allow them to come up with their own solutions.

- Accept the chaos; don’t try to bring order to it. Learn to thrive in the same chaos that ANSF will be operating in.

- You have to believe in the cause. If you are not willing to fight and risk your life right next to the Afghans, then they will never respect you. If you fight next to them and prove your mettle, they will do anything for you. This shared danger and hardship will bring loyalty and respect from the ANSF.

ANA: Credible Force

- The ANA is the most respected institution associated with GIRoA. We must capitalize on this!

- The ANA is an aggressive and capable fighting force at the company level and below. Our close assistance and mentoring at the battalion level and above is needed and must improve.

- Bottom Line: ANA battalions are deep in the fight and lack the training time to develop as a unit.

  - ISAF must live and operate with ANA.

ANP: Para-Military/Local Police Force

- We must first develop a para-military police force that can fight and win against the insurgency and protect the population from intimidation, provocation, and terror.

- Once the insurgency is defeated in an area or region, then we must develop and evolve to a local community-based police force that respects the rule of law and gives the people justice, honor and fairness.

- Focus effort on building capacity and reducing corruption by engaging in close partnership and mentorship.

  - ISAF must live and operate with ANP.

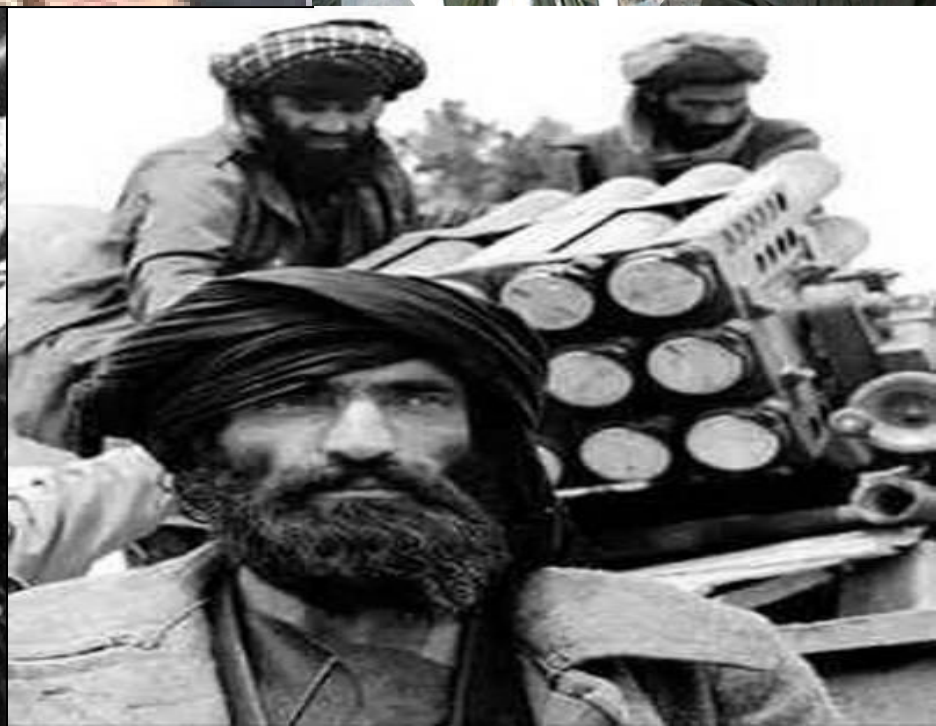
ABP: Para-Military

- As ‘the Protector of the Border’:
  - they interdict insurgents and disrupt their freedom of movement,
  - they help prevent criminal activity along the border, and they protect Afghanistan’s economic interests.

- Although part of the ANSF they are the ‘poor brother’ and are chronically corrupt:
  - poorly trained, poorly equipped, poorly led.

➢ ISAF must live and operate with ABP.

The Insurgency In Afghanistan



Insurgency in Afghanistan

- **ISAF definition of the insurgency**

  "The Afghan insurgency is a networked movement with diverse motivations aimed at the overthrow of the elected Government of Afghanistan through the use of subversion and armed conflict in order to establish local authority in support of their aims or to re-establish the Taliban".

The Insurgency in Afghanistan is a Pashtun Insurgency and the Taliban have Prerequisites to be Successful

- **Vulnerable Population (a Cause):**
  - The insurgents must offer hope of change and exploit political, economic, or social dissatisfaction with the current government.

- **Leadership Available for Direction**
  - Leadership that can direct the frustrations of a dissatisfied populace along the lines delineated by the insurgent's strategic desired end state.

- **Lack of Government Control**:
  - It may be real or perceived. The greater the control the government has over the situation, the less likely the chances for insurgent success; the opposite is also true.

The Taliban's Principles and Practices

1. **Terrorism:**

   -The calculated use of **unlawful** violence or threat of unlawful violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to **intimidate** governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological.

2. **Provocation:**

   - Carry out **atrocities** that prompt opponents (counterinsurgents, government or sectarian opponents) to **react** violently, in ways counter to their interests.

3. **Intimidation:**

   -**Terrify** and **coerce** members of the government security forces, civil administration and the insurgent's own community who cooperate with, or support the government.

4. **Protraction:**

   -**Draw out** the conflict to **avoid** strong counterinsurgent forces, control own loss rates, enhance the exhaustion effect and preserve strength after setbacks.

5. **Exhaustion:**

   -**Soak up** assets of the counterinsurgent forces and government agencies in actions that require **major effort**, but do not advance their.

Somewhere in Pakistan there is a **True Believer** that is training to kill you. He is training with minimum food or water, in austere conditions day and night. The only thing clean on him is his weapon. He doesn't worry about what workouts to do---his rucksack weighs what it weighs and he runs until the enemy stops chasing him. The True Believer doesn't care how hard it is; he knows he either wins or dies. He doesn't go home at 1700; he is home. He only knows the “Cause”. What are you doing to prepare to kill this True Believer?

QUESTIONS?